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House Gets Own Nanotech Legislation to Consider

By [Michael Pastore](#)

October 18, 2002

One month after the Senate Commerce Committee passed legislation promoting nanotechnology funding and development, Rep. Mike Honda, D-Calif., introduced the Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Advisory Board Act on Thursday.

The bill, H.R. 5669, would establish an independent advisory board comprised of leaders from industry and academia to advise the President and Congress on research investment strategy, policy, objectives and oversight related to the government's National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI).



Honda, who represents California's 15th District, which includes the technology-heavy Silicon Valley, is a member of the House Science Committee.

"It will take many years of sustained federal investment for the nanotechnology industry to achieve maturity, and it is critical that the President has structures in place to ensure that the U.S. leads the world in its development," Honda said in a statement. "The federal government's nanotechnology strategy must have clear goals and metrics to assess our country's progress. Additionally, nanotechnology will give rise to a host of novel social, ethical, philosophical and legal issues. It will be important to have a group in place to predict and work to alleviate anticipated problems."

The NNI, a collaboration of 13 federal agencies, currently exists at the whim of the President. It began in 1996 under President Clinton, and thus far has enjoyed the support of the Bush administration.

Honda's bill was sent to the House Science Committee, and likely will not be the only nanotechnology bill the committee will have to consider.

The Senate Commerce Committee passed 21st Century Nanotechnology Research and Development Act in September, and which awaits consideration by the full Senate. That may not happen before the end of the current session. The Senate legislation was introduced by Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., of the Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space. The legislation is also sponsored by Sen. Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., and Sen.

George Allen, R-Va.

Honda's House bill echoes the Senate bill, which also called for the creation of a Presidential National Nanotechnology Advisory Panel. The Senate bill includes the establishment of National Nanotechnology Research Program; the creation of a National Nanotechnology Coordination Office; and would place coordination and management of the nanotechnology program under the National Science and Technology Council. To study the potential long-term effects of nanotechnology, a new Center for Societal, Ethical, Educational, Legal and Workforce Issues Related to Nanotechnology would also be established by the Senate bill.

Government Support of Nanoelectronics will be the focus of a panel discussion at the Nanoelectronics Planet Conference & Expo, Nov. 18-19, 2002, in New York, N.Y. For more information: <http://www.jupiterevents.com/nano/fall02/>.

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